

Learning Target FAQ's

Should learning targets be consistent in like courses?

For the most part, learning targets will be consistent in like courses because those courses are aligned to the same standards. Teachers of these like courses will find benefit in collaborating to craft learning targets. However, learning targets may be adjusted according to class need on a daily basis.

How often are learning targets referenced?

Checks for understanding will occur at appropriate times throughout and at the end of a lesson to gauge student progress toward the target. Targets can be referenced as students self-assess their progress toward the goal. It is important that the learning target be reference at appropriate times to help make it meaningful to students. Just posting the target is not enough.

How do we get students to care about targets?

Having students actively engaged in monitoring their own progress toward learning targets helps students understand the importance of learning targets. Students are better able to monitor their progress toward the target and become more invested in the learning as consistent use of learning targets helps them focus on the expectations of the day.

Can the learning targets be verbal instead of written?

In order to accommodate various learning styles and levels of our students, the learning target should be posted, verbalized, and modeled. When the target is posted, it is a constant visual reference throughout the lesson, and this increases the likelihood that students will use the target to monitor their own progress.

How specific should learning targets be?

Learning targets need to be in line with the standards and match the learning by clearly expressing what students should know, understand or be able to do. Targets should be written in student friendly language. Targets must be specific enough that students and teachers understand how they might be measured at the conclusion of the lesson. If a target is not easily assessed, it is probably not specific enough. Be careful that the learning target actually focuses on what the students should learn as a result of instruction, NOT the learning activity itself. It is a learning target, not an activity target.

How do we decide on learning targets without state standards?

Learning targets reflect what a student should know, understand, and be able to do as a result of instruction in a particular lesson. In following backward planning, the teacher uses common documents, such as summative assessments, course goals, and curriculum maps or pacing guides to determine the learning targets. Mastery of learning targets should lead to proficient performance on a unit assessment, so analyzing the assessment before beginning instruction will help a teacher develop learning targets for each lesson.

What are some ways to get students to reflect on learning targets?

Several checks for understanding are available under "Quick Links" on the district web site. Regular use of some sort of exit slip at the end of a lesson or teaching segment helps students get into the habit of reflecting on their own learning. Students might be asked to think of or explain their progress toward mastery of the targets. Using Kagan cooperative learning structures throughout the lesson is also an effective way to reflect on learning targets and gives the teacher a quick picture of student understanding.

I am a traveling teacher, how can I do this?

Use clear plastic sleeves with rings attached to the top to keep a set of targets for the unit.
Use sentence strips--they can be laminated so you can wipe off and reuse.
Put the learning target on a student handout for the lesson.
Use technology--incorporate learning targets in a keynote on multiple slides.
Use an overhead transparency or write the target on the white board, then erase when you leave.

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Does every concept need a target?

Think about: What do you want your students to learn? Your target should answer this question. In fact, a big or complex concept will likely have multiple targets as you build understanding of that concept.

Who writes learning targets?

The learning target is written by the classroom teacher, using student friendly language aligned to course standards and assessments.

Do you differentiate for learning ability of students? (multiple learning targets in a class?)

From the October 30, 2009 district professional development keynote:

Targets should **Rarely** be Differentiated: *What do you want students to understand, know, and be able to do as a result of your instruction?* The learning target is the same for every student--it's the minimum goal for learning-- but the learning activity/check for understanding might be different based on student needs.

Is it okay to have unit targets instead of daily targets?

No, unit targets are too broad to focus learning for a particular lesson. Learning targets should focus on the learning for that day. Think about: "What is it you want your students to learn today?" You might have unit goals posted and then refer to those goals as you discuss your learning target for a particular lesson. This helps students understand how their daily learning activities will prepare them to achieve the bigger unit goals.

How can students graph their progress?

The teacher will select the learning goals for a unit based on the unit standards. If the teacher makes these unit standards/goals visible to students, the students can reflect on their progress toward those goals as they reflect on each lesson learning target. While there does not necessarily need to be an actual graph, the teacher could actually set up a graph for students to keep track of their progress toward the unit goals as they meet each learning target.

Should we use both content and language targets?

ELA teachers are required to have both content and language targets as they focus on the content they want the students to master and the language students will use to build or show understanding for a particular lesson. While other teachers are not required to write a target for each, it would be beneficial for teachers who teach a large number of English language learners to think about how both could be helpful to their students.